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HEARING ON NOMINATIONS TO THE
ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

United States Senate,
Committee on Rules and Administration,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:39 p.m., in Room SR-301, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Dianne Feinstein, Chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Feinstein and Bennett.

Staff Present: Howard Gantman, Staff Director; Jennifer Griffith, Deputy Staff Director; Veronica Gillespie, Elections Counsel; Adam Ambrogi, Counsel; Carole Blessington, Assistant to the Majority Staff Director; Joshua Brekenfeld, Democratic Professional Staff; Lynden Armstrong, Chief Clerk; Matthew McGowan, Professional Staff; Justin Perkins, Staff Assistant; Molly Barackman, Staff Assistant; Mary Jones, Republican Staff Director; Shaun Parkin, Republican Deputy Staff Director; Michael Merrell, Republican Counsel; Abbie Platt, Republican Professional Staff; Trish Kent, Republican Professional Staff; and Rachel Creviston, Republican Professional Staff.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN FEINSTEIN

Chairman Feinstein. Good afternoon, everybody. Senator Bennett is on his way. We will need the two of us before we swear you in before your testimony, but in the interest of time, I think I will just quickly begin with my remarks.

We meet today to consider the nominations of four individuals to the Election Assistance Commission: Gracia Hillman, of the District of Columbia, for reappointment to a term expiring December 12 of next year; Rosemary Rodriguez, of Colorado, for reappointment to a term expiring in 2011; Donetta Davidson, of Colorado, for reappointment to a term expiring December 12, 2011; and Gineen Beach, of New York, for appointment to a term expiring December 12, 2009.

The Commission is an independent, bipartisan Federal commission created in 2002 by the Help America Vote Act. It is charged with making payments to States to improve elections, developing guidance for the requirements of the Act, maintaining and regulating the National Voter Registration Form, adopting voluntary voting system standards, certifying voting systems, and serving as the national clearinghouse for election information.

While the Commission has done a lot of work on these issues, there have been problems. Due to questions on potential interference from the Department of Justice on a Commission report of voter fraud and voter intimidation, the EAC Inspector General released a report. That report included a number of recommendations that were necessary to improve transparency in contracting protocols at the Commission. So I look forward to learning about the Commission's progress on following those recommendations.

I also understand that there have been a number of systemic delays that have slowed the Voting System Certification Program. Now, this is the first time the Federal Government has certified voting systems and I am very interested in knowing about the progress of that program and how long it will take for systems to be certified on the Federal level.

I know that the work of an EAC Commissioner involves contact with election officials, voting system manufacturers, and independent test labs. As you proceed with your important work, we would ask you to keep in mind the end user of all of this, which you do, and of course that is the American voter.

As Commissioners, you have an unique charge. With very limited regulatory authority, your job involves identifying the challenges facing voters and finding ways to help the States overcome those obstacles.

Before I conclude, I would like to address a report that I requested the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, to perform, and that report is being released today. Based on questions regarding State procedures on certification of voting systems, I asked the GAO to answer five questions.

One, what voting methods and systems are used in Federal elections and what changes are underway?

Two, how do States approve voting systems?

Three, what other steps do States need to take to ensure accuracy, reliability, and security of voting systems?

How do States identify, evaluate, and respond to voting system problems?

And how do States view Federal voting system-related resources and services?

One of the findings in need of an immediate focus is, and let me quote from the report, quote, "The extent of the respondents' awareness of systems problems is unclear because less than one-half of them had statutory or administrative requirements to report problems. Officials we interviewed told us they relied on local jurisdictions, voters, and voting system vendors to voluntarily report problems," end quote.

To resolve this problem, I believe as a first step you all should read this report, and secondly, consider written reporting requirements that can inform election officials Statewide, and then nationally, when a voting system malfunctions so the appropriate officials can address these concerns rapidly.

I know that this may not be completed prior to this election, but I hope that in the very near future we have a better knowledge of voting system errors so that these problems can, in fact, be resolved.

That completes my opening statement. Now, Senator Bennett is not yet here. Can I proceed legally to hear the witnesses? Yes? Okay.

Then let me proceed to interview the witness list, and I will introduce them all quickly and then we will just go right down the line, beginning with Ms. Hillman. She was appointed to the Election Assistance Commission in December of 2003. Previously, she worked at the State Department, developing agency-wide strategies for advancing and protecting women's rights. She also served as Executive Director of the League of Women Voters, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation.

Next is Ms. Donetta Davidson, of Colorado. She was appointed to the Commission in July of 2005. She served as its Chairman last year. Prior to the EAC, she served in a number of election administration positions in Colorado. She began her career as a county clerk in 1978 and served as Secretary of State in Colorado from 1999 to 2005.

Next, Rosemary Rodriguez, first nominated to the EAC in 2006, and she now serves as its Chair. Prior to her work on this Commission, she served in local government positions in Denver. She also worked for grassroots civic and voter advocacy organizations, including co-founding the Latina Initiative, a voter registration project to register Latina voters.

And last but not least, Gineen Beach of New York. She currently serves as Elections Counsel for Ranking Member Vernon Ehlers on the Committee on House Administration, the House counterpart to the Senate Rules Committee. Previously, she worked for former Maryland Governor Bob Ehrlich as a policy advisor, concentrating on election law issues.

That completes that. I might tell you, we have a very important security briefing at four, so I am going to ask each of you to confine your remarks to five minutes, if that, and then we will have a small opportunity for questions, if we might do that.

So Ms. Hillman, why don't you begin.

STATEMENT OF GRACIA M. HILLMAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ELECTION
ASSISTANCE COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER
12, 2009

Ms. Hillman. Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chairman Feinstein, and to Ranking Member Bennett and members of the committee. I am Gracia Hillman and have served on the Commission since it was first appointed in December 2003. Thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding my nomination for reappointment. I am honored to be here and will use this opportunity to thank the President, Speaker Pelosi, and the many others who have expressed confidence in me. I am also proud to be joined today by my son and members of my family and friends.

Madam Chairman, citizens are eager to vote this year and are asking if America is ready, so I will put the progress and improvements that have been made in context with the question of readiness. Voting is a human exercise. Readiness involves both voters and election administrators. Voters need accurate and timely information. Election administrators need sufficient resources.

Voter registration deadlines are quickly approaching. The act requires computerized Statewide voter registration lists. Many States have been challenged by the task and the Commission has provided assistance with suggestions for immediate actions and future improvements. Election day readiness requires voter lists that are accurate and timely available.

Voting by early or absentee ballot is a growing trend. The Commission has produced best practices, which include suggestions to make certain that the votes of our military and overseas citizens will be counted. Provisional ballots are required in the Act as fail-safe ballots. However, the uneven application of this requirement by the States has caused some confusion and concern among voters. The Commission issued best practices and collects data that will help Congress determine if provisional voting is working as intended.

The Commission has produced a wealth of information based on studies and research. Never before have so many in America been so thoroughly informed about how elections work. In addition to our training programs, we produce hard copy materials and our website now hosts more than 1,000 documents.

Most voters have confidence in the voting systems they use, but many do not. As with any other technological transformation, a period of transition must occur to get us from punchcards and levers to the voting systems of today.

Madam Chairman, there are occasional anomalies, but we are not stuck in the badlands. We are seeing improvements and will continue to push for excellence. Voters deserve world-class voting systems that perform with 100 percent accuracy and top-notch security.

The Help America Vote Act authorized the funding of

grants for research on voting technology improvements. Such research would serve America well during this period of transition, but regrettably, funds have not been appropriated. Nonetheless, the Commission adopted the required voting system guidelines. We instituted the Federal Government's first certification program, as you noted earlier. The program provides for rigorous testing and requires reporting by States. But in my opinion, the process is not complete. I believe that the Commission should assist States with all of their certification needs.

Crucial to election day readiness are two million election judges and poll workers. To help meet this need, the Commission produced manuals on the recruitment, training, and retention of poll workers, including college students.

Before closing, I want to thank this committee for its support of the Commission. Election improvement under the Help America Vote Act is a massive undertaking. It involves many key players and such partnerships are in place. I believe the work needs to continue until we have restored the full faith and confidence of our citizens in the voting process.

I look forward to the opportunity to continue working with Commissioners Davidson and Rodriguez and look forward to Ms. Beach joining the Commission. I have every confidence that we can accomplish the task at hand.

The Help America Vote Act rings in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, Fannie Lou Hamer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Caesar Chavez, and Justin Dart. It also rings for the untold others who have committed their lives to make certain that every eligible voter has a full and equal opportunity to vote and to have his or her vote counted.

Madam Chairman, I thank you for your time and am pleased to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hillman follows:]

Chairman Feinstein. I must say, well done. You came out with 14 seconds.

[Laughter.]

Chairman Feinstein. Ms. Davidson, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF DONETTA DAVIDSON, OF COLORADO, TO BE
A MEMBER OF THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION FOR
A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 12, 2011

Ms. Davidson. Good afternoon, Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Bennett. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Senate Committee on Rules today. I would also like to thank the President of the United States, President Bush, for my nomination, who has made it possible for me to be in this position at this time. And I also would like to thank Senator McConnell for his support in my renomination.

Unfortunately, my family couldn't attend today, but there are here with me in spirit.

It has been an honor to serve at the Election Assistance Commission as a Commissioner since August of 2005. This appointment has allowed me to continue with a passion that I have had. As you noted, I have been in elections for over 30 years. It has been my only profession.

Unfortunately, as has been said, we do not have everything accomplished, but we are working hard in that effort. The election, no matter whether it is at a county level or if I am at a State level, we all take an oath, the oath to uphold the State laws and the Constitution, and then as appointed as a Commissioner, I took an oath to uphold the Federal law and the Constitution. It has been my belief that the Constitution and the laws definitely have to be followed in every step of the way.

It is also my belief that we have to be very nonpartisan. In my positions always in the past, I reacted in a nonpartisan way and serving every citizen that came before us.

As a Commissioner, I will strive to ensure that election reform that reaffirms the right to vote to every eligible citizen and to have all votes counted as cast. I am committed to work with the stakeholders in conjunction with the Commissioners and the staff to achieve the goals as stated in the Help America Vote Act.

I thank you for allowing me to be here with you today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Davidson follows:]

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you very much, and you have three minutes left, so that is excellent. Thank you.
Ms. Rodriguez?

STATEMENT OF ROSEMARY E. RODRIGUEZ, OF COLORADO,
TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE
COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 12, 2011

Ms. Rodriguez. Thank you, Madam Chairman, for the opportunity to be here today, and I, too, am deeply honored. I appreciate the confidence of the Senate Democrats, Senator Salazar, Senator Reid, and your assistance in my initial appointment, and the President's confidence. I take it quite--it is quite an honor.

I can't believe you are having this hearing this week. You have got so much going on.

Chairman Feinstein. Yes.

Ms. Rodriguez. But at the same time you are coping with the economic situation, election administrators all over the country are preparing for election day. Your report will help us in those unfortunate circumstances when there is a voting anomaly to create a record so that others can learn from it.

The Help America Vote Act charges us with the improvement of the administration of Federal elections and I believe that the EAC has made significant strides in achieving many of our statutory mandates. But one of the ways our performance can be improved is to develop procedures that allow the Commission to meet its objectives more efficiently.

If reconfirmed, one of my principal goals will be to work with Commissioners and staff to implement a strategic plan for creating those procedures by which you and the other members of Congress and the public are assured that the EAC operates efficiently and that the actions of its Commissioners and members are consistent and fair.

I request today to confirm my appointment to the EAC so that I may continue to protect the voting rights of citizens, which I believe is my principal role here, and I thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Rodriguez follows:]

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you very much.
Ms. Beach?

STATEMENT OF GINEEN BRESSO BEACH, OF NEW YORK, TO
BE A MEMBER OF THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 12, 2009

Ms. Beach. Chairman Feinstein, Ranking Member Bennett, and members of the committee, I thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. It is an honor to be nominated by President Bush to serve on the Election Assistance Commission. I would first like to thank my husband, Andrew Teach, as well as my mother, Linda Bresso, my aunt, Deirdre Laratro, and my cousin, Marnie Laratro, and some of my friends and colleagues, all of whom are here to support me today.

I would also like to thank Ranking Member Vern Ehlers of the Committee on House Administration, with whom I have had the distinct privilege of working as counsel on a wide range of Federal election issues. I appreciate Congressman Ehlers' confidence and support of my nomination to this important and crucial position.

Over the past five years, my work experience has been focused around the study of elections. Presently, I serve as Elections Counsel on House Administration. Like the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the House Administration Committee has oversight of the EAC. In my role as counsel, I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with Commissioner Rodriguez, Commissioner Davidson, and Commissioner Hillman on a lot of these important election issues, and further, through my work on the committee, I have become familiar with the EAC's functions and operations.

I have also worked directly on legislation and policies affecting Federal election administration and have truly learned to appreciate the critical role that the EAC plays as a bipartisan Commission.

Prior to my work on the Committee on House Administration, I have served as a policy advisor to Governor Ehrlich of Maryland, where my primary responsibility was advising the Governor on his oversight of the Maryland State Board of Elections. In this capacity, I gained extensive experience in election law and administration from the perspectives of State and local election officials.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work with my fellow Commissioners on fulfilling our responsibilities under the Help America Vote Act.

Again, I thank you, Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Bennett, for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Beach follows:]

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you.

Let me point this out, for a minute. Senator Bennett is on the committee with respect to the rescue plan for what is happening out there economically and my understanding is they are making an announcement about this time, so he may well not be able to get here. It is one of the problems we have. I think I serve on 12 different subcommittees, and so sometimes it is impossible to make it. But I understand from the staff that I do singly have the authority to go ahead and ask you questions. We will dispense then with the hearing.

I have a few questions I would like to ask. It is my understanding that 11 States will be using new voting equipment on November 4. In fact, more than 55 percent of voters will be using paper ballots counted by optical scan voting systems. My question is this. How have you assisted State officials to ensure that voters receive proper instruction and all the assistance necessary to carry out these new voting systems, particularly the electronic ones where there may be no paper trail?

Ms. Hillman. Is this a question for each of us or whoever--

Chairman Feinstein. Whoever would like to answer.

Ms. Hillman. Okay.

Ms. Davidson. I can--

Chairman Feinstein. Ms. Davidson?

Ms. Davidson. Excuse me. I am sorry. We have done several things. We have provided quick start manuals for the States, not only to make sure that their equipment has been tested prior to election and tested well, but setting up the election and security of it and then making sure that they do test. We also have quick starts on auditing the election after the election, and as we have tried to provide them a lot of detailed information.

We also have done a great deal of a study on ballot layout so that they can lay out the ballots more properly and that there is not the confusion of the voters. Again, trying to help the voters. If the ballots are confusing, obviously we know that the voters will have difficulties.

Chairman Feinstein. Let me ask you, do these quick start manuals or whatever they are go out to the Secretary of State or the county clerks?

Ms. Davidson. Thank you for that question. It is excellent. They go out to all of the State Secretaries of State, but they also go out to around 7,000, a little over 7,000 election officials throughout the nation. So we try to take those out even when we give speeches. At any conference we go to they hand out extra ones. We try to make those available. It is also--all the information is on our website at www.eac.gov, and everything we produce, we put up on the website so anybody can see it, even the electors and the citizens so that they are aware.

Chairman Feinstein. Good. Ms. Rodriguez?

Ms. Rodriguez. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I would

like to add that we have encouraged voters to be a little more assertive this election because of what we expect will be record turnout.

Chairman Feinstein. Yes. This was going to be my next question. Because we expect inordinately long lines, high voter turnout, what has the Commission--perhaps you can take this one--what has the Commission done to assist with this?

Ms. Rodriguez. Several things. We have asked election administrators to prepare for a record turnout and then we have encouraged voters to learn the--first of all, to check their registration status and verify that they, in fact, are registered at their current address, and then avail themselves of the information related to their local election. What is the ballot layout? Where is my polling place? Sample ballot materials are available, and the voter--it is a burden this year, it is an extra burden, but we are really encouraging them to get engaged and get engaged early.

Chairman Feinstein. I am going to ask all four of you if you would particularly be on the alert. We have been discussing a bill to provide nonpartisan voter registration in veteran facilities. I didn't realize it, but when a member of the military goes into a veterans' hospital or home, they lose their registration. So many, particularly those that are very incapacitated, don't have an opportunity to register to vote.

So what we have been trying to do is get the Department of Veterans Affairs to have some ability to allow nonpartisan NGOs, Secretaries of State, to come in and register veterans so we can get the maximum participation from people who have served our country honorably and well and then are injured.

I would just like to ask that--well, it was sort of a fight and it wasn't until we had the hearing, I guess it was last week, the night before, the Veterans Administration decided they would cooperate. Virtually every veterans' group supports this legislation.

I don't know that we will be able to get it done before we recess, but I would like to ask the Commission to take a special look after this election and see how much the Veterans Administration has really done to see that the hundred thousand veterans that are hospitalized have an opportunity to register and to vote. So would you agree to do that?

Ms. Hillman. Madam Chair, that will be a very important thing to do, as well as I would certainly hope that the people who run the veteran facilities would make it clear what the rules are for the nonpartisan groups who are going in to do the voter registration. There is nothing worse than the confusion about when you can do it and who can do it and how you can register. And there still is sufficient time for very simple procedures to put in place. But you make an excellent and a very legitimate request.

Chairman Feinstein. Well, I certainly would not be at

all adverse and would be very grateful for your interaction. It is very difficult to know how cooperative the Veterans Administration is really going to be, because they basically did not want to do this. I think that would really be too bad. So any oversight that you all can provide, you are going home, you are all from different communities, it would be very interesting for you just to visit some of these facilities and then let us know what you see, sort of the eyes and ears, if you wouldn't mind doing that. Does everyone agree? I assume, for the record, everyone does agree.

Ms. Rodriguez. Yes, we all agree.

Ms. Beach. Yes, we all agree.

Chairman Feinstein. Last Monday, USA Today reported that experts estimate that a third of voters nationally are expected to vote absentee or early--a third. Now, contested States like Colorado, one of your home States, Nevada, and New Mexico project that about half the voters will cast their ballots early. How has the EAC adjusted to these expectations and has the Commission urged voters to vote early? Who would like to take this?

Ms. Davidson. I can take it, or start, and--

Chairman Feinstein. You start.

Ms. Davidson. As you spoke, in Colorado, we have always had the last few years about a percentage of about anywhere from 45 to over 50 percent of our voters voting either early or absentee. But the Commission, in seeing that a lot of States were making absentee laws, really opening them up where they didn't have a reason to vote absentee, or they were also doing early voting, we have also done quick starts in that area that we have up on our websites, giving States guidance on how they really should be working and making sure that they have got the ability to handle it.

We have not taken a stand on whether they should be-- citizens should vote early. The only stand we have taken is to have--asking the electors to inform themselves, because if their State laws allow for those things, they may want to take that option in looking into it. But we feel that is up to the States, and obviously their State laws.

But we do want the electorate to be informed and we feel that that is very important in all the steps, what their rights are.

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you. Before Ms. Rodriguez, now that Senator Bennett has been able to be here, I am going to issue the oath. I will just stand and ask if you would please stand and raise your right hand and affirm the oath when I complete its reading.

I do solemnly swear that the testimony I provide is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God.

Ms. Hillman. I do.

Ms. Davidson. I do.

Ms. Rodriguez. I do.

Ms. Beach. I do.

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you very much.

Now, if anyone else has a comment. Ms. Rodriguez, I think you were--

Ms. Rodriguez. Yes, please, if I might just add that we have encouraged election officials to make the full array, cafeteria of options known to voters in an assertive way and encourage voters, once they decide who they vote for, who they want to vote for, to go ahead and select and option and cast their votes.

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you. Ms. Beach, you are the only new member of the Commission, and so let me ask this question. For the past five years, your career has focused on election law and administration issues. How do you believe your experiences have shaped--this is a no-brainer, easy, softball--

[Laughter.]

Chairman Feinstein. --have shaped your ability to be an effective member of the EAC?

Ms. Beach. Well, thank you for the question. I believe my experiences--first, working for Governor Ehrlich, I had experience working firsthand with the Maryland Board of Elections and with the voters themselves, the constituents that came in, so I am familiar with State law and how that process works when it comes to election administration.

My experience on the House Administration Committee, I was able to not only study Federal election law, but also learn about issues. You know, we have had several hearings over the 110th Congress on a lot of different aspects of election law. So I believe coming in as a lawyer with both the Federal perspective and a State and local perspective, I can contribute significantly.

Chairman Feinstein. Thank you. One last question and then I will turn it over to Senator Bennett. In today's New York Times, and it quoted you, Commissioner Rodriguez, the article indicates that hundreds of thousands of voters whose homes have been foreclosed upon over the last year may have problems voting. If voters have recently been displaced or are living with a local family member, changing their registration may not be the first thing on their mind.

Now, because of the large number of people that this potentially impacts, what should voters and election officials do right now to ensure that every eligible voter can vote on election day?

Ms. Rodriguez. Our message to each and every voter is the same. Check your--verify your status today while there is time to change it, to update it, if necessary. I completely understand the turmoil that some families are experiencing economically today. I--actually, my landlord lost her place in a foreclosure and I had to move in six weeks and it was a big mess, and I had to find a place. It is very distressing. It is a terrible situation. But this is such an important election. We want everybody to

participate and we hope that each and every voter will examine their status and just make sure that they are prepared.

Chairman Feinstein. Would you say how they do that?

Ms. Rodriguez. Contact either by the telephone or the Internet their local election official in the county in which they reside, and they can also avail that information through the EAC's website. And then ask for an update, or for their current status, and if it needs to be updated, obtain information on how to do that from their local--

Chairman Feinstein. Or I assume they can go--it is usually the Registrar of Voters. I am speaking, of course, for California now, but certainly voters can call a Registrar of Voters or a city clerk or go down to their city hall--

Ms. Rodriguez. Correct.

Chairman Feinstein. and ask to be referred to the correct person and see if they are, in fact, registered.

Ms. Rodriguez. Exactly.

Chairman Feinstein. Or register.

Ms. Rodriguez. Motor vehicles offices--

Chairman Feinstein. Motor vehicle offices--

Ms. Rodriguez. --or drivers' license offices, and, of course, human services offices, which they may encounter.

Chairman Feinstein. Right. Right. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, ladies.

Ms. Hillman. Madam Chair, may I add just one more point to that? Because every State administers voter registration procedures differently, a lot of people believe that as long as they are within the State, their voter registration status follows them, and voters don't understand the importance that in some States, you have to be living at the address that is on the voter registration books.

So another message that we are getting out is even if people believe they are properly registered, it is so important to double-check to make sure, because it is very frustrating when a voter shows up and says, "But I am registered to vote," and it is an address change issue that has gotten in the way. Fortunately, there is provisional balloting, but in some cases, the provisional ballot wouldn't count if they weren't in the right jurisdiction.

And there is a new or a different, an additional definition of early voting which is if you can't use absentee or early voting, to vote as early in the day as possible so that if there is an issue, there is time for the voter to correct the issue before the polls close.

Chairman Feinstein. Well, let me just say thank you. I think you are all very knowledgeable, and Senator, I turn it over to you. This is a piece of cake.

Senator Bennett. Well, I have looked at the resumes of each one of the nominees here and I agree with you, this is a very easy thing to do, so let us do it. Thank you.

Chairman Feinstein. Oh. Well, let me say thank you,

Senator Bennett.

Let me welcome the families and spouses, and I see a son here. We are delighted to have you. I hope if you have a chance, you will look around the room, because I think this is one of the most beautiful rooms in the Capitol and the Rules staff can tell you about the ships up at the top. They are all part of our history.

I would like to thank the nominees. We will process your nomination as rapidly as possible.

So thank you very much and the hearing is concluded.

[Whereupon, at 3:16 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]